



M E M O R A N D U M

Date: November 17, 2014

To: Board of Park Commissioners

From: Robert Stowers

Subject: Change in Hours at Leschi-Lake Dell Natural Area

Requested Board Action

Parks recently completed an 18-month pilot project in the Leschi-Lake Dell Natural Area to permanently reduce the open hours of the park. (A separate briefing paper addresses the pilot in the adjacent Leschi and Frink parks.)

Based on Seattle Municipal Code Section 18.12.245, the Board of Park Commissioners makes a recommendation on whether to make the change in hours permanent based on the staff evaluation and public testimony. The vote can occur the same day as the presentation of the evaluation or at a later date should the Commissioners require additional information to make a decision.

Staff Recommendation

The Leschi-Lake Dell Natural Area meets all the criteria to permanently change the hours from 4:00 a.m. -11:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. -10:00 p.m. Staff recommend the permanent change in hours in order to continue the progress made during the pilot to reduce negative behavior and improve the peace and tranquility of the Leschi community that has been realized during the pilot period.

Park Description and location

Leschi-Lake Dell Natural Area is located at 3525 E Terrace Street in the Leschi neighborhood. It is categorized as a Natural Area, and the maintenance is split between Parks' natural area crew,

volunteers through the Green Seattle Partnership, and the Central East maintenance crew which does routine maintenance and litter control.

The Leschi-Lake Dell Natural Area was acquired with funds from the Pro Parks Levy and the assistance of Cascade Land Conservancy in September 2001. Friends of Leschi Natural Area host volunteer work parties to care for and restore the natural area on the first Saturday of each month to keep this area beautiful for the entire community. Local neighbors, bird watchers, and walkers delight in the views and visiting the natural forested areas.

Issues

There have been numerous complaints from the neighboring community about noise, drinking and drug use occurring at Leschi-Lake Dell Natural Area. The police are aware of the area as a place where people congregate to party and they encourage the neighbors to call 911 because of the noise and the activities which often continue late into the evenings and early mornings.

During their daily maintenance of the park, the stewards find the area riddled with drug paraphernalia and empty alcohol bottles. Seattle Parks maintenance crews have a long history of collecting empty drug baggies, broken liquor bottles, empty beer cans, broken bongos, used condoms tampons. There is also a long history of graffiti at this site.

The late night park users make noise which disturbs the neighborhood and take up the limited neighborhood parking. Police patrol the area four to five times a day but it has not been enough to temper these activities. Neighbors and Parks staff cite four specific reasons for requesting the change in hours:

- 1) Actions of the people visiting the Natural Area after the hours of 10 p.m. have unusually compromised the peace and tranquility of the Leschi-Lake Dell community.
- 2) The rise of negative activity in the Natural Area and on the street outside the entrance is causing after-hour noise and parking issues for the community.
- 3) There has been a continued increase in the number of reported unsavory characters drinking and taking drugs in the park close to closure time, or after hours.
- 4) Community members do not feel safe confronting those who loiter in the park after hours.

Additional Information

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Attachment

Map of Leschi-Lake Dell Natural Area